

Message Text

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63/46
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

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P 221500Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4341
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
CINCEUR
USDOCOSOUTH
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5636

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2B(3))

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, TU, GR, US
SUBJECT: HEADING OFF AN AEGEAN INCIDENT

REF: (A) ATHENS 7260 (DTG 191146Z JUL 76), (B) ATHENS 7381
(DTG 211521Z JUL 76)

1. UNFORTUNATELY AT THIS POINT THERE CAN BE ALMOST NO DOUBT
THAT TURKEY, DESPITE GREEK OBJECTIONS AND THIRD-PARTY
ADVICE, WILL SEND THE SISMIK I (EX-HORA) INTO AEGEAN INTER-
NATIONAL WATERS FOR SEISMOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION. IN THE PAST
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MONTH, NOT ONLY THE U.S. BUT ALSO A NUMBER OF OTHER NATO ALLIES
HAVE MADE HIGH-LEVEL DEMARCHES TO THE GOT ON THIS MATTER AND
HAVE URGED NON-PROVOCATIVE, CAUTIOUS BEHAVIOR. THE GOT'S RESPONSE
HAS BEEN TO ASSERT TO ONE AND ALL THAT THE SHIP'S ACTIVITIES WILL

NOT BE "PROVOCATIVE" IN THAT THE SHIP WILL NOT RPT NOT TRESPASS GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THAT IT WILL CARRY OUT SCIENTIFIC OPERATIONS THE GOT CONSIDERS WITHIN ITS RIGHTS. THE GOT HAS ALSO STATED THAT IT WILL RESPOND IN KIND TO ANY GREEK INTERFERENCE WITH THOSE OPERATIONS. THUS IF GREECE ATTEMPTS BY FORCE TO STOP THE VESSEL ON THE HIGH SEAS, A MILITARY CONFRONTATION WILL BE PRACTICALLY GUARANTEED.

2. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES--AND DESPITE THE FACT THAT A NUMBER OF DEMARCHES HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE ON THIS TOPIC--WE WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST (SUBJECT TO COMMENTS FROM EMBASSY ATHENS) A FURTHER EFFORT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES. WE RECOMMEND THAT AT THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEVEL OR HIGHER IN WASHINGTON, THE DEPARTMENT INITIATE A NEW ROUND OF DEMARCHES WITH THE GREEK AND TURKISH EMBASSIES. WE ARE SUGGESTING WASHINGTON RATHER THAN FIELD VENUES FOR TWO REASONS: (1) THE PATHS TO BOTH BITSIOS' AND CAGLAYANGIL'S DOORS ARE PRETTY WELL WORN BY NOW BY AMBASSADORIAL DEMARCHES, WHILE THE LEVEL OF DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON HAS NOT RECENTLY BEEN AT A COMPARABLE LEVEL, AND (2) CALLS ON FONMINS, IN ANKARA AT LEAST, FREQUENTLY RESULT IN INTENSIVE AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE PRESS SPECULATION AND LEAKS. WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT

A. IN WASHINGTON, THE TURKS COULD BE TOLD THAT:

(1) WE BELIEVE THE SAILING OF THE SISMİK INTO THE AEGEAN IS NEEDLESSLY RISKY: IT COULD AT A MINIMUM CRITICALLY ENDANGER CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE DCA AND SERIOUSLY ADD TO THE EXPLOSIVENESS OF THE AEGEAN SITUATION; AT WORST, IT WOULD LEAD TO ARMED CONFRONTATION OR EVEN WAR.

(2) WE APPRECIATE FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL'S ASSURANCES THAT THE GOT WOULD BE "VERY CAREFUL" IN WHERE THE SISMİK SAILS.

(3) WE RECOMMEND, AS A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF THE GOT'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS, THAT ANKARA PUBLICLY RESTATE THAT THE SISMİK'S EXPLORATIONS ARE PURELY SCIENTIFIC, THAT THE GOT WILL OFFER TO SHARE THE RESULTS WITH OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, AND THAT IT WOULD WELCOME THE PRESENCE OF GREEK SCIENTISTS ON BOARD. (THIS LATTER ONLY IF THE SISMİK HAS NOT SAILED AT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE TIME).

(4) WE NOTE THAT IT SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED THAT ELEMENTS OF THE GREEK NAVY MAY BE "TRACKING" THE MOVEMENTS OF THE SISMİK. WE WOULD REQUEST BOTH SIDES TO USE EXTREME CARE AND TO ACT WITH RESTRAINT AND CAUTION.

B. IN A PARALLEL WASHINGTON DEMARCHE, THE GREEKS COULD BE TOLD THAT:

(1) WE VIEW THE STATUS OF THE AEGEAN SHELF AS IN DISPUTE, WITH NEITHER SIDE HAVING A CLEAR AND UNCONTESTED CLAIM TO THE AEGEAN SEABED.

(2) WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE NON-BELLIGERENT TONE ADOPTED BY THE GOG IN THE JULY 20 STATEMENT (REF B) OF ITS

INTERPRETATION OF THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS CONCERNING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE GOG UNDERSTANDS THAT THE 1958 GENEVA CONVENTION ACCORDS A LATITUDE OF FREEDOM FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF THAT ARE AS YET UNDEFINED AND IN DISPUTE.

(3) WE NOTE THAT THE SAILING OF THE SISMIK DOES NOT IN ANY WAY ALTER THE VALIDITY OF THE GREEK LEGAL CLAIM TO THE AEGEAN. WE SUGGEST THAT PUBLIC AND CONSTANT GOG REITERATION OF THIS POSITION (I.E. THAT WHEREVER THE SISMIK GOES, ITS ACTIVITIES HAVE NO BEARING ON THE GREEK LEGAL POSITION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER) WOULD PROTECT ITS INTEREST IN A MORE LEGITIMATE, MORE EFFECTIVE AND FAR LESS DANGEROUS WAY THAN THE THREAT OF FORCE AGAINST AN UNARMED VESSEL ON THE HIGH SEAS. (THE US DOES NOT CARE FOR ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE SHIPS OPERATING OFF ITS COSTS, BUT IN THE HIGH SEAS, HET IT DOES NOT ASSERT THE RIGHT TO ATTACK THEM)

(R) WE BELIEVE IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THE GOG EXERCISE CARE IN ITS "TRACKING" OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE SISMIK AND THAT BOTH THE GOG AND THE GOT ACT WITH RESTRAINT AND CAUTION.

4. A FURTHER POSSIBILITY THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WOULD BE TO REQUEST FROM THE GOG ON AN URGENT BASIS ITS MAP OF THE DISPUTED AND UNDISPUTED AREAS OF THE AEGEAN. IF, AS WE SUSPECT, ALMOST THE ENTIRE AEGEAN IS FORECLOSED (FROM THE GREEK POINT OF VIEW) TO TURKISH SEISMIC RESEARCH, WE COULD ADVISE GREECE THAT SUCH A POINT OF VIEW WILL ALMOST INEVITABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAD TO AN INCIDENT. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GREEK MAP "PERMITS" EXPLORATION OF LARGE AREAS OF THE AEGEAN OPEN SEAS, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS WHERE THE TURKISH PETROLEUM OFFICE (TPAO) HAS CONCESSIONS, WE COULD ADVISE THE TURKS TO RESTRICT THE SISMIK'S EXPLORATIONS FOR THE TIME BEING, AT LEAST, TO THE NON-DISPUTED AREAS. IF THE TURKS ARE AMENABLE TO THE FOREGOING, WE COULD ASK THEM TO PROVIDE THE GOG THE PROJECTED COURSE OF THE SISMIK.
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NATO
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